

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SY-05 AID-05 DHA-02

OMB-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00

SIL-01 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OC-05 CCO-00 /096 W

----- 113916

R 080650Z APR 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3921

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA ETHIOPIA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI GR

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0301

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: ATTACK ON MASSAWA CEMENT FACTORY

PAGE 2 RUFTEFA5301 C O N F I D E N T I A L

1. AS REPORTED IN ETHIOPIAN MEDIA, INSURGENTS ATTACKED MASSAWA CEMENT FACTORY ON NIGHT OF APRIL 2-3. ACCORDING TO LOCAL ELPA AUTHORITIES AND OTHER SOURCES, ATTACK WAS AGAINST ELPA SUB-STATION LOCATED AT CEMENT FACTORY. STATION HOUSED EMERGENCY GENERATOR AND OTHER TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT FOR FACTORY BUT PLAYS NO PART
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IN POWER TRANSMISSION TO MASSAWA OR AS BACKUP FOR ASMARA. ATTACK

DESTROYED GENERATOR, AND ELPA CONFIRMS ANNOUNCED ESTIMATE OF ET\$250,000 DAMAGE. POWER FOR FACTORY CAN BE DRAWN FROM MASSAWA'S MUNICIPAL GENERATOR, BUT PRODUCTION IS EXPECTED TO BE REDUCED AS RESULT THIS ATTACK. FYI ITALIAN INSURANCE ADJUSTER SENT FROM ASMARA TO PHOTOGRAPH DAMAGE WAS SET UPON BY EPMG COLONEL RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY, AND HAD CAMERA AND FILM CONFISCATED. INSURANCE CLAIM WILL BE HELD IN ABEYANCE UNTIL THIS IMPASSE RESOLVED. END FYI

2. COMMENT: IT IS KNOWN THAT MASSAWA CEMENT FACTORY HAS BEEN OPERATING AT MARGINAL LEVEL FOR MANY MONTHS AS THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT DOMESTIC MARKET, ALTHOUGH IT HAS BEEN EXPORTING MODEST AMOUNTS TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN REGION. THERE WERE EVEN

PAGE 3 RUFTEFA5301 C O N F I D E N T I A L

REPORTS THAT CLOSURE OF FACTORY WAS IMMINENT, THUS ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THIS ACTION SHOULD BE MINIMAL. PRINCIPAL RESULT OF ATTACK WILL BE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR SOME 150 HIGHLY-PAID WORKERS. YET THIS ATTACK AGAINST ERITREAN INDUSTRY IS CONSISTENT WITH PATTERN WHICH SEEMED TO BE EMERGING AFTER LATE FEBRUARY-EARLY MARCH EFFORTS AGAINST ETHIO FABRIC, MELOTTI BREWERY AND SAVA (GLASS FACTORY). APPARENT AIM OF THESE ATTACKS ARE TO INCREASE UNEMPLOYMENT AND THUS DISAFFECTION, AND DENY TO EPMG REVENUES FROM ERITREAN INDUSTRY.
SHERRY

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Message Attributes

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